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SUNDAY, MARCH 2

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

In the Educational Department of The Times this morning we print an article from Rev. S. H. Thompson, pastor of the First Baptist Church at Farmville, Mr. educated man, an educated teacher, an noted for his mental vigor, his courage and his moral integrity. Such a man is entitled to a respectful and considerate hearing upon all questions, and especially upon this subject of education, which he has made a life-long study.

Mr. Thompson addresses himself to some of the obstacles in the way of public education in Virginia. First of all, he speaks of "neighborhood littleness." He the met in this community and that petty prejudice against the teachers, and that parents will sometimes keep their children www from school in order to punish the teacher. The second obstacle which he mentions is the lack of interest or pride in the school and its surroundings. He says that he has noticed in some sections that parents give little or no thought to the public school, too often for the reason that they are satisfied that their children are not getting much benefit from their attendance, and so do not care particularly whether they go or not.

In the third place, he speaks of the wretched condition of the school-houses in various parts of the State. We invite extention to what he says under this head as Dr. Frazer has been censured for what he said concerning the school-Bouses in Virginia. Dr. Frazer's remarks as reported were rather broad, but, haying talked with him in private, we are sure that he did not mean to convey the Impression that all country school-houses were mere hovels. Of course not. There are numerous school-houses in the rural districts that are altogether decent and comfortable, if not artistic, and we are sure that Dr. Frazer knows this as well as anybody. Nor does Mr. Thompson mean to say that all the school-houses of the country are "small log or frame, single-room affairs, innocent of paint or ornament, unsightly and uncomfortable," But he does mean to say that there are many such school-houses through the State, and in this he is abundantly borne out by the Virginia School Journal, the official organ of the State Board of Education. In an article on this subject published some time ago the Virginia School Journal said:

This is the season of the year for school superintendents and school trustees to visit the schools in their respective jurisdictions and to see that all is going well The public-school system with them. has been in operation in Virginia for thirty years, and yet in many of the counties the school buildings are totally unfit for human habitations. In many instances they are old tenement houses that have been moved from the farm to the public road, and are not even owned the district but are rented at expristant rates, sometimes as much as ings. We know of some school districts in Virginia that do not own a single one of the buildings used by them for public school purposes: and yet the are rich in natural resources and taxable

They seem to be willing to allow private persons to fit up deserted tenement houses or to build new ones at such places as may be most convenient to them, and then charge the districts what they please for the use of them. This ought not to be. Whenever it is possible the district should own and control all the public school buildings.

And again: If then we wish to improve our schools, we must provide slightly, convenient and well-furnished buildings for the children. It is a sname that the children of this State are compelled to sit during the cold dreary winter months in such unsightly uncomfortable buildings as many of the districts provide for them. No wonder complain that the schools are the people complain that the schools are not doing what they should do for the rising generation. School officials should remember that the ugly, uncomfortable buildings in which school children are housed have a silent yet irresistible in fluence on the tastes and character o children that attend them The bare wall fits the vacant mind, and the ugly sur-roundings teach the child to be content

with ugly and common things.

There is no more urgent demand for reform in any department of public school work than is the demand for better work than is the demand f buildings in the rural districts.

Mr. Thompson also speaks of the "inefficient and poorly equipped teachers" as an obstacle to advancement in the public school system. He says that he has seen "well-equipped teachers thrust aside for some girl or boy who was totally unfit, both by nature and training. for this difficult work," and he cites some interesting examples which have come under his observation. These selections are made, he declares, through favoritism, or for political purposes, or for the selfish ends of certain members of the board. We trust that what he says under this head will also receive the most careful attention of the proper authorities. He declares that political influences are at work here and there in the system and everybody who has taken the trouble

to inquire knows that that is true. On another page of to-day's Times we print a large number of communications on this subject. They should be read by all who feel an interest in the subject. We wish to say here that The Times, in inviting discussion on this subject, has not been partisan. We have opened our col-

them thoroughly interested, and the on object which we have in view is to im prove the public school system of the State. If we have pointed out defects, it is because we wish to correct them.

A KNOTTY PROBLEM.

A bill has been introduced in the Legis lature to prohibit the employment in manutacturing plants or mercantile establishments of children under fourteen years

The Times has as tender a regard as any for the children of this Commonwealth, and we know that many of them are made to work in the factories and in the stores when they should be in school. We know also that in some cases indolent parents put their children to work into factories in order that they may live in idleness on the earnings of the little ones. Such cases have been called to our attention several times of late, and it makes the blood boil. Recently a girl came to Richmond from a neighboring city, and would have been Thompson was for years a resident of lost if a kind-hearted policeman had not Halifax county and there conducted a rescued her. She explained that she had large and influential school. He is an a drunken father who kept her at work in a factory and took her wages to spend educated preacher-a preacher who is for drink; and so she determined to run away from him.

But there is another side to the question. There are widows-and quite a number of them. we doubt not-with a house full of children, whom they are not able to support, and in such cases the children must work or starve or go to the almshouse. It would be terrible to have a law which would prohibit such children from working, and this phase explains that every now and then is to of the question must be taken into consideration by the members of the Gen-

eral Assembly. We were talking some time ago with a be a thoroughly pious and kind-hearted feels very kindly towards women and lessness and sin. children. He said that he really did not with them. It is a difficult problem to the sufferer to Christ! solve, and the Legislature in dealing with This household was troubled by an un-

A TEUTONIC TRIPLE ALLIANCE.

good in the visit of Prince Henry of Prussia to the United States. It has tended noticeably towards allaying prejudice and removing misunderstandings by merely revealing the good intentions of Germany and their willing exceptance by the American people. The cause of universal international amity will be advanced to the point of safety when the intercourse and reasoning of time have developed the innate friendship for one another that exists between the Teutonic races in the original Germany, the later Great Britain and the United States. A tacit understanding for peace between these Governments would establish as thoroughly as by written treaty an invincible balance of power.

The Anglo-Saxon race, as the Englishspeaking world is called for convenience's sake, sprang from the same Teutonic stock, which is pure to-day in the kingdoms of the German Empire and in Scandinavia. The present district of Angeln, in Schleswig-Holstein, was the home of the Angles, who migrated to Britain and gained it the name of Angle-Land, or England; and the English-speaking Saxons that emigrated later from the lowlands between the Elbe and the Weser were our progenitors, the Anglo-Saxons The great grandfathers of the Normans were the Norsemen of Rollo the Dane. and whatever Keltic strains have crossed the Teutonic blood have been of as pure Aryan origin as that of the fairest Saxon in England. It is this livelier and more leavening strain of Keltic blood that makes the only basic difference between the German people and the English people and the American people. Variety of circumstance has done the rest. According to the Immigration Bureau, we have absorbed over fifteen million Germans since the Revolution (with their descendants probably twenty million) without a shock and to our good. Why? Simply because in all the elementary principles they are our blood relations. For the same reasons English immigrants are Americanized in a generation. This is not true of any other race, except perhaps the English-speaking Kelts; and they were really long ago flooded with Scandinavian and Norman and English blood.

Recognizing that in blood and instincts and mental processes and language there is a most powerful affinity between Germany, Great Britain and the United States, it must follow as a Divine intention that these brethren should dwell together in amity; and to that end we devoutly believe that the best efforts of the best people of the three Powers should be made to cement a cordial friendship between them.

THE PENITENTIARY.

The Fredericksburg Free Lance refers editorially to the "open letter" which The Times recently published, exposing the disgraceful condition of things at the State penitentiary, and declares that "an outraged people are greatly incensed, and the legislator who dares to impede the swift passage of a bill having for its object the immediate relief of our penitentiary will be marked as an unfit person to represent any community."

The Free Lance concludes: When such a conservative paper as The Richmond Times bolls with indignation in a discussion of this subject and states, "With full knowledge of the import of the words we employ, we believe that the Almighty God will manifest His less be favorably considered and passed. displeasure and visit this sin upon the State of Virginia if the Legislature does

or torturing him to death by inches. The Free Lance endotses every word employed by The Richmond Times in its address to the Legislature, and sincerely hopes that the time is near at hand when Virginians shall be relieved of this awful disgrace and the poor wretches at the penitentiary of their untold suffering. Let us quit theorizing about the best way to relieve our penitentiary and also the best way to improve our public roads, and let those in authority at once order the working of our public highways by Virginia's convicts.

The practical suggestion in the Fre-Lance's article is that "every citizen should at once place himself in direct communication with his representative in the Legislature and demand of him all the support that an honest relief bill shall require."

That is the best way to bring about reform, but the difficulty is that the pe3ple of the State do not know how bad the penitentiary is. They believe that the statements concerning it have been exaggerated. If they knew they would no tolerate.

THE FATHER'S CRY.

"And one of the multitude answered and said: 'Master I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit " and he said of a child. And oftimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him, but if thou rainst do anything have cominto the waters to destroy him, but if thou canst do anything have compassion in us and help us. Jesus said are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe help thou mine unbelief.' "—Mark xi:17-29-24.

It is a pitiful picture here presented to us: A poor boy in agony of body, a father in deep and almost hopeless distress, surrounded by a crowd of idle on-lookers. unable to help in any way. It is a vivid picture also of the life of all true Christions. With them, as with the Master. work and conflict, amid scenes of weakcotton manufacturer, whom we know to ness and sorrow, will always be the rule. It was one of the Multitude that spokeman-a man who has done a great deal that multitude which lies about us, alto help distressed humanity; a man who ways oppressed with distress and help-

Here we see a whole family in misery desire to employ children in his factory, because of one of its members. Trouble but that some of the appeals made to him may be intensive as well as extensive. by widows he simply could not resist. One prodigal may destroy the peace of He declared that it was a matter of the whole household. The wayward child common humanity to give these children in his sin is followed by the anguish of employment to keep starvation from the aching yet loving hearts that cannot let door; and, of course, when children of him go. If one member suffers, all the this sort are employed other children, ethers suffer with it and through it. not so unfortunate, must be employed There is one remedy and only one-bring

it must look at it from every point of controllable circumstance. The sufferer in this case was not to blame. His affliction appealed therefore all the more strongly for him. Some troubles we bring upon There are unlimited possibilities for ourselves; others are put into our lot by a power beyond us.

Alas! that there are some who seek to bring sorrow and shame on those who so tenderly love them! The gray hairs of a father, the tears of a mother, and unheeded, until too late. But in every case there may be help or relief by believing prayer. The sickness may be sore, the call long delayed, but no case is helpless as long as praye rand effort may be made for it

The blessing had already come to this afflicted family. The household was united in deep concern, for one of its members. The father spoke, not for himself only, nor yet for the suffering boy, but for them all, when he said, "Have compassion on us, and help us"

Amid the sorrows of that household there shone the pure and levely light of sympathy.

In His illness they were all bound to gether by the strong, and tender tie of pity.

We learn form this incident how early in life we are attacked and injured by Satan. The Father gives a fearful description of the miseries inflicted on His poor Son. We are told further that he had been under this awful visitation from

His infancy. It came on him "of a child." There are much worse things than sorrow, or even death! It is when the mem-bers of a family can bear these sorows untouched. A cold, unfeeling heart is far greater calamity in a family, than the

most painful prolonged affliction, Which made his case more sad and the cure more difficult. The devil aims at the total ruin of those whom he rules and works, for he seeks whom he may de-

We must not overlook the lesson here. We must labor to do good to our children from their earliest infancy. How soon in life a child becomes responsible it is difficult to say. Perhaps far sooner than we suppose. One thing is clear, it is never too soon to pray and strive for the salvation of the souls of our children; never too soon to tell them of God and Heaven and the cross of Christ. And when we have done all we are in the position of the father here. We bring them to Christ for His healing word and power. For into His hands we must soon or late commit the destinies of our children, knowing He will do what is right

For years this boy and the whole family had suffered. Cruel years, with hope dving lower, lower as His misery became more permanent. Remedies and physicians had been tried again and again, but in vain. One thing only was leftto bring him to Jesus of Nazareth.

His very helplessness is His strongest plea, as He lies prostrate at the feet of The Master.

And now comes the supreme, the crucial test, on which everything depends. 'Cans't thou believe." the Saviour asks the Father. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

"Lord! I believe!" is the instant and tearful reply. But he feels that nothing can be hid from the All-Seeing Eye in whose presence He stands; so He adds the earnest prayer: "Help thou, mine unbelief."

Can any doubt that, while he spoke that prayer was answered in the highest and fullest degree for both?

The bill which has been introduced in the Legislature to increase the salary of the surgeon to the penitentiary seems to be a bill of merit, and it will doubt-The duties of this official are most one umns for these correspondents to say just what they think, and we are desirous of presenting both sides and all sides of the question.

The Times feels a deep interest in this subject, and as a public journal it is endeavering to stir up the people, to get

State of Virginia if the Legislature does not soon go to the reilef of those accursed wretches in the penitentiary." it is high time something be done. When we curse that one of this omedia are most one not soon go to the reilef of those accursed wretches in the penitentiary." it is high time something be done. When we curse when cases of sickness are reported it is God's creatures how can we expect to escape His curses? When a man violates the law he ought to be punished, but clylized punishment does not mean treating a fellow-man worse than a brute

SICK HEADACHE CURED.

and its return prevented by Jur. Dayld's tution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and when cases of sickness are reported it is concessary for him to examine the continuous tution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and when cases of sickness are reported it is tution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and when cases of sickness are reported it is concessary for him to examine the continuous tution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and when cases of sickness are reported it is curses? The united of this office when institution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and when cases of sickness are reported it is tution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and when cases of sickness are reported it is curses. The united of this office when the institution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and when cases of sickness are reported it is curses. The united of this of this office when the institution at 7 o'clock in the morning, and all stomach and liver troubles, the size and all stomach and stomach and liver troubles, and all stomach and liver troubles, and all stomach and liver troubles, and all stomach and st

of the institution, to see that proper precautions are taken to prevent the spread of any contagious disease that may break out, to attend all cases of sickness, as well as to treat convicts who have

From October, 1900, to September, 1901, inclusive, the surgeon made 40,836 calls. He treated in the hospital 418 cases and in the cells 2,906, making a total of 3,324. He also treated more than 140 wounds of one sort or another.

The State hires out most of the con victs, and has been making something like \$50,000 a year net profit out of the institution. Yet the surgeon to the penitentiary receives only \$60 a month. It is generally conceded that the surgeon now in charge is thoroughly faithful in his duties, and it is also conceded that his services are worth far more to the State than the pay which he receives.

Ex-Governor Tyler, who understands the onerous duties of this position, has recently written a letter to a friend in Richmond, in which he expresses himself as being heartily in favor of a reasonable increase in the surgeon's pay.

The Richmond Review, a weekly publication, made its appearance on the streets of the city yesterday. It is edited by Mr. William Pendleton, ons of the brightest writers in the city. 11.001

CURRENT TOPICS.

Two Disgusting Classes.

There are certain persons who, in order to show their dislike of monarchies, and perhaps to acquire a cheap reputation for patriotism, seize upon every opportunity to vaunt themselves upon their hatred of Kings, Princes and everything which in any manner, no matter how re mote, pertains to royalty. These people usually render themselves highly ridiculous. On the other hand, there are in this country, we are sorry to say, a very large number of persons whose greatest delight is to bask in the smiles of royalty and to bow themselves down and make abeyance to Kings and other for-eign potentates. They dearly love Kings, Princes and Emperors and really seem not only willing but actually anxious to abase themselves, if by doing so they can win the smiles and approval of roy This latter class is much mor than those who go to such lengths in pretending to show their contempt for roy alty. Sensible people have very little pa-tience with either class.—Spirit of the alty. Se Valley.

Danville's Night School.

The night school begun some two weeks or more ago in the lecture-room of the First Presbyterian Church, in this opens up a sphere of activity full of promise of incalculable good. Those who are giving their time and talent to this work will receive good second only to that which they confer. The object of this school, as has been previously stated, is to furnish instruction to young people whose necessities are such as to compe them to labor during the day and thus lose the opportunity of attending the pub-The importance of such a school first impressed itself upon the minds of workers in the mission Sundayschools. It was hard to give religious instruction where the rudiments of an education had not been acquired. We un-derstand that the interest in the night school is remarkable. Unfavorable as the weather has been nearly ever since opened, the attendance ha and teachers are encouraged by exhibitions of aptitude and eagerness to learn. -Danville Register.

Advice From a Friend.

Richmond seems to have been fairly in the Jamestown celebration by Norfolk, and she might as well fall in gracefully and help Norfolk oull off" the biggest thing ever If Richmond wil try she car biggest kind of a show what make the ever the character of the undertaking, and we feel quite sure she will lose noth ing substantially by making the best of Norfolk's victory.—Staunton News.

Redistricting the State.

Senator Barksdale has introduced a fill in the State Senate redistricting the State for Congressmen under the census of 1900. This will be the sharpest poll-Every district as now constituted changed by Mr. Barksdale's bill. All he counties and two cities (Charlottes viile and Winchester) now composing the Seventh District are retained, and Orange county is added. Augusta county and the city of Staunton are transferred from the Tenth to the Sixth District, and Con nen Otey and Flood are put in the district. The Eastern Shore is taken from the First and put into the Second District. Many of the counties which have a large Republican vote are grouped in the Tenth District, but the new arrangement is said to leave all the other d'stricts Democratic .- Rockingham Register.

A Nation's Duty.

A decade agone we were doubtful about letting the Sandwich Islands fall into our lap. To-cay we are reaching out and buying islands and archipelagoes, We are no longer the Jack Horner of nations, sitting demurely in our corner and calling our humble pie, but we are become a factor in world politics.

It is unfortunate that many Democrats are holding on to the old traditions of political minorities-obstruction pure and simple, opposition for the sole of embarrassing the majority-instead tiny, and joining hands with all who favor progress. May we rise to the measure of these greater opportunities -Gordonsville Gazette.

A New Industry.

As announced in the news columns of this paper the prospect of having a new canning industry in Emporia is good. Such an establishment would be of great value to the town and the county at large. It would help the farmers diby giving them new crops by they may escape the raising of cotton and pounuts, of which so many are heartily tired.—Emporia Messenger.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad.

Owing to temporary obstruction of consection track. Southern Railway through trains leaving Elba, northward, 6:12 P. M., daily, and arriving Elba, southward, 2 P. M., daily will not run vla Richmond

until further notice.

W. P. TAYLOR,

W. D. DUKE,

Traffic Manager General Manager.

SICK HEADACHE CURED

quired to look after the general health PRESENT CONDITION OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUNYON'S WITCH HAZEL SOAP

By S. H. THOMPSON.

Editor of The Times:
Sir,—There is a popular saying that
"The common schools are the hope of the
State." If this be true, and in a great opinion. I know personally quite a num ber of teachers who, on this own persona merits would never have entered a school room but for such reasons as I have stated they received appointments. I have known old and inefficient people put measure it is, then anything which tends to awaken an interest in them, to point out their defects, to aid in making them into the school-room as a matter of charity. I have yet to find any member of the family of one of these local rural boards who wanted to get a school and more efficient, to bring the people to see that the very best results are attained by this vast expenditure of public reve-nues, should be welcomed by the general fai. I had a local politician to tell me in one of the James river counties that he could not have obtained a school body of citizens throughout the Commonwealth. The aim of this paper, while containing some very unpalatable facts, is constructive and not destructive. I for either of his daughters, though both of them were full graduates of the State Female Normal School, but for a politibelieve that the country school contains in its student body material which is vital cal "pull" he had, Through which he succeeded.
These are merely suggestive obstacles: to the future welfare of the State. is no part of our citizenship that should appeal to the intelligence and patriotism many more could be given. The cases abuse of the schools could be multip of the Commonwealth more than those

country boys and girls,

the stream or the railroad cut.

velopment, the school-house.

have the school near him.

for either of the children or the teacher

districts three houses that would

serve the name of school-house for the sum mentioned. Eleating devices and ventilation seldom trouble the minds of

local school boards. As these buildings

the most progressive teacher is discour-

aged in trying to beautify them and their

surroundings. I have known them to be removed for the merest whim or ca-

price. I have in mind as I write a case

where the local member of the Board had the school moved to his side of a large

creek, because he did not want his chil

dren to cross it. This removal took the

school four miles from many of its pa-

4. Inefficient and poorly equipped teach-

I know two girls who received cer-

first grade certificate, four years.

as one well could be for a teacher. Her

that the teachers asked that she

utter astonishment she not only received

an appointment, but the other girl failed

to be considered at all. Behind it all

was a "pull," as a local politician told mo afterwards. Such a state of affairs can

be duplicated in many, alas! very many,

of our school districts.

5. In many instances the School Boards

themselves are a great hindrance to true

progress. Often these positons are sought

for a purely personal and oft-times mer-cenary motive. They can be and are used for one of three purposes, frequently

are, to supply positions to members of the family; to gain political influence in

the community; and to gain trade. It is amazing how many of these local School Boards are made up of the coun-

try merchants and local politicians. The

is terorized by an over-bearing member of the Board who is also a supervisor. The best people in that district told me

that he never allowed a school to any one

unless it was t his personal advantage to do so, and that no road mending could

be done unless he was a parter in the job. I stayed in this district for nearly

for all three by the same person.

then dropped out. I was amaz she should apply for a school.

sent home.

She came in this

To my

way for about a year, and ped out. I was amazed that

ing.

case where a man offered for two

school is of infinite importance to the

almost indefinitely. Neither are they pe

culiar to any small and local district, but

cover a large area of the State. I have body politic. In discussing the present condition of our public schools I snall selected them from various countles Each of the cases given except one refer to white people. Another class of ob-stacles I have chosen to denominate genconfine myself to the schools in the rural I propose to consider some of the oberal, because they cover a wider field and are more general in their application. Among these I shall name (I) the County Superintendent. For the really competent and helpful superintendent I have a profound admiration. Some of this close stacles in their way and to point out what seems to me after years of experience as a teacher of teachers, to be some of their imperative needs. It has been my privi-lege to become acquainted with the counprofound admiration. Some of this class I claim as my personal friends, and I ginia counties. I have sent many teachers from my own school-rooms into these know they have done a noble work in ers from my own school-rooms into these rural communities, whose reports I have, but I shall state only what I myself have seen or heard from those interested in the several schools. I want to begin with encouraging and fostering true se ment concerning the public schools. But in many cases I have known the office to be simply a position given to men for what I choose to call the local obstacles service and for favors-sometimes as matter of charity. It, too, has been used in the way of the best results in these schools. These may be stated as follows: 1. Neighborhood littleness. This crops as a political power, or as a means of favoring friends. I have not found as much of denominationalism as some wou out in many ways, but in each one of have us suppose, yet I know one instance them does infinite harm. There is the spirit of meanness that keeps the children where the superintendent in every case showed special favors to the member his church. Some times they have most cruel tyrants. A lady who away from school to punish a teacher whom the parents do not like. The law whom the parents do not like. The large requires the teacher to make a certain average, and the object of keeping the children away was to cause a failure. I asked a farmer why his children were not in school, and he replied that he, with A lady who been trained in the State Normal told me she taught a country school and received there for \$150. It cost her \$75 to attend a Summer Normal and she did this under a threat of the superintendent, that unsome of his neighbors, were determined less she did so she would not be allowed to get rid of the teacher, and took this to teach in his county. I knew another who scattered consternation and distress method to do it. On investigation, I found that there was no objection specially to in his official visits by his cruel and bitthe teacher, but this crowd had wish ing criticisms. I have been struck with ome one else and deliberately set themthe fact that so many of these county selves to accomplish the ruin of the school. Then there is a foolish and hurtsuperintendents are old and often decrepit I believe in ful prejudice against teachers from ful prejudice against teachers from a distance. The school is a neighborhood affair, and it must be given to a neighborhood boy or girl. This keeps the money in the examinity. There is also a distance of the community. Political influences. 2. Political influences, I believe in political parties and political creeds. I have no words of condemnation for either, but when the children of the Commonwealth must be sacrificed to subserve political ends I think it is time that the people should call a helt. I am personally in the community. There is also a disposition to find fault with anythink new. I have been fold that I would be doing better work should I take these young people to the school-room and keep them at their books. This was said because some inventor.

ple should call a halt. I am acquainted with counties in where such things are done. I where such things are done. The days in a village of some four hundred people, living in splendid homes and they themselves having much of refinement and some ignorant patron of my school found me with a geology class wandering along The idea culture. I found here an old friend whom of ornamentation on the walls of the school-room is laughed out of counter-I had known in his boyhood. He was Personal spite is also allowed to were of school age. This gentleman told me that it cost him twelve dollars per find its vent in these schools. A gentleman told me that the school in his vi-cinity was moved more than a mile simmonth to send these children to school. I asked him why he did not send his children to the public school, as I found in ply to spite him. On investigation I am sorry to believe that it was true. my town most excellent advantages in our 2. Lack of interest or pride in the school graded school. He replied that they vir-tually had no public school in the town; that the public school was taught in a or its surroundings. The matter of teach-er being settled for the current term very frequently no fourth thought is given it. room of a widow lady's house, by the widow herself, and she was so inefficient that it was a waste of time to send to her. When I expressed my astonish. I have seen and talked with parents who complained that their children had learned nothing for the two past school terms, and a question brought out the fact that her. When I expressed my astonish-ment and asked for a reason he said: ore than half the time they had been "I am a Democrat and have always voted that ticket, but we have a peculiar state out of the school.
3. I should give as one of the most of affairs in this community. Some of our leading citizens are strong Republiprominent obstacles in the way of de-These are cans, and one of the ways of punishing them for it is to deprive them of their usually small log or frame, single-room affairs, innocent of paint or ornament. They are frequently situated in some re-Their politics costs me and of my other neighbors twelve dollars apiece per month, because we are commote or out-of-the-way place, where somebody gave a half acre of land to pelled to employ a private teacher." How long will Virginians stand such politics as that? That seemed to me to be a are more unsightly often than the as that: That seemed to he do a case of attaintment equal to feudal days. Some may say that this is an extreme case and no other like it can be found in the corn houses or the tobacco barns. They are often destitute of any conveniences They are frequently the result of job-bery in neighborhood politics. I knew a It is to be hoped that it is, but the fact that such a state of affairs is possible ought to cause every true citizen in the Commonwealth to rise up and and fifty-seven dollars to build three country school houses. These houses were supposed to be able to accommodate demand a change in the management of our schools and such a change that these abuses could not be repeated. not less than one hundred and fifty chil-dren. A moment's reflection would show that no mortal man could build in remote

I am personally

abuses could not be repeated.
3. Too many schools. I am firmly convinced that we ought to have fewer and thus better schools in the country. They have in some quarters been multiplied beyond reason. I have in mind a community where one can stand on a hill and see not far away three schoolhouses and two others are but a little and two others are but a little unclouded, a Sun of Righteousness, and

farther off. These are some of the existing obstacles as they present themselves to my mind which cause the system to yield such little fruit compared to what has been expected of it. I wish in couclusion to merely mention some of the needs of our rural schools. Aside from the need for better houses and equipments, better teachers to use the equipments that are already at hand, our schools stand in great need of
1. A cordial and lively sympathy from

ers. This is almost, if not quite, a curse of the system. I have seen well equipped and capitally-prepared teachers turned the intelligent people of the State, both in the county and the city. Those who in the county and the city. Indeed will be in town and city, where good schools are the rule, where everything is conducive to culture and refinement, do not know and cannot understand thesa things. We need their sympathy and down for some girl or boy who was totally unfitted both by nature and traintificates, one a first grade, the other a third grade. These girls were in my school for a time, the one who held the things. We need their sympathy and practical aid. Then, too, we need the sympathetic touch of the large tax-payer. sympathetic tolich of the large tax-payer. Too often he payes his taxes with a grunt of dissent and then dismisses the whole subject from his mind. He should consider this an investment and look after his money and demand a legitimate rehad taken a course of study, had taken my lectures on Methods and Management, and in ever yway done her best to prepare for teaching. She never failed in a single examination while in school. The other girl never passed an examination in the turn from it. She was as unfitted by nature

2. We need a proper understanding of the real importance of the public school system to the State. We have allowed the petty politician to use it for his own ends too long. We have grumbled at it and abused it, allowed it to be used as charity, ignored it and so far as the country school is concerned, we have allowed it to be the foot-ball of unfavorable circumstances in too many cases. We need to have it deeply impressed upon the people that this is not only at investment of dollars and cents to be carefully looked after, but that it in-volves the moral and civic destiny of the Commonwealth.

3. There is a crying need for sympa-thy and encouragement from the general public, for these faithful teachers, local boards and superintendents, who, amid all the discouragements herein set forth, have kept the system from total failure. These need better pay and better proision for the work demanded at their bands. Nothing I have written can nor does it apply to some of the teachers, local boards and county superintendents. whom I have known. These have done valiant service, but these are the bright spots on the face of the system which

merchants capture the trade of the teachers and their friends, while the petty has been so sadly abused by others.

4. We need to remove the public school system forever from the reach of polipoliticians capture the votes and the inpoliticians capture the votes and the influence. I knew a case where a negro teacher was given a school with the express understanding that he would buy a horse with the money from a member of the Board who was dealing in horses. ticians, either high or low. There is no need to shut our eyes to unpleasant facts. It has been used in the past for forwarding the schemes of politicians I knew another case where a girl was and rewarding political friends. This given a school with an understanding that should cease, and it should take its place in the hearts of the people as one of their most sacred possessions. she would pay a store bill of her mother. I know a school district in Virginia which

Lastly. I give it as my own consclentious conviction, after looking into the results of such work, that the money used for the Summer Normal and such institutions should be used to employ cational meetings in accessible points to job. I stayed in this district for nearly which not only teachers should be in-a fortnight and this was the universal vited, but also the general public. In

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such meetings the whole subject of pub-lic education could be discussed and thus a general interest could be awakened throughout the State. Four really interested educators, spending a time for three years in such work all their accomplish more in arousing and informing the people than all the summer nor-ers would do in a lifetime.

S. H.THOMPSON.

Farmville, Va.

OUR RELIGIOUS CONTEMPORARIES.

Stephen means "crown." In the sad tragedy enacted outside the walls of Jerusalem on the day when Stephen gave up his life, a faith-THE MARTYR ful witness for the AND THE CROWN. truth, we have exhibited the very

crown of Christian fidelity. The apostle Paul never forgot the part he played in that fatal enactment. When called by the divine voice to go "far hence unto the Gentiles," at once there came crowding tpon his thoughts the day "when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed"; it was then that "I also was standing by. consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew himconnection with Stephen had a shaping influence upon the apostle's life. As Augustine has well said, "Had there not been a Stephen, there had not been a From the hour of Stephen's martyrdom, the goads of conscience begin to prick the heart of Saul, the persecutill, on the way to Damascus vielded himself to the risen Jesus, with eds "What wilt thou have me to do, Lord?"-Religious Herald.

Lent is a season of retirement. It is a special opportunity for self-denial, for self-discipline, for the exercise of self-control. But it THE SIGNIFICANCE is not as mere OF LENT. self-cultivators, mere lovers of a

higher manhood, to make ourselves martyrs or saints. It is as servants of God, as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we are to use the period and season to bring under the body and practice habits of submission; to bring every thousand of our heart and every effort of our being into captivity to the law of Christ. Mere into captivity or fasting is a its of submission: to bring every thought self-denial, abstinence or wholesome thing. But all that may be done from a wrong motive-for strife and cebate-and not in the fear of God as an cebate—and not in the fear of God as an act of submission. And God only can judge of it. It is not for the church, the rector, the bishop, or the general world to pronounce on its worthiness. It is between the soul and God. And we are to anoint the head and wash the face, put off every show of sanctimoniousness, and be clothed with decency and propriety.-Southern Churchman.

The head in the sunlight, and the feet in the miry world is a picture of the Christian life. It is ours to walk where the paths are A LESSON FROM soiling and

THE WEATHER. SO not always easy to pick our steps and find a footing firm and safe. But above is the air of reason, and truth, of faith and high purpose. And over all is the sunlight of God's love, spread far across

the heavens, coming down to us with bidding and promise. It is the light of heaven on the darkness and peril of the world, showing us the one safe path. "This is the way, walk ye therein."
As long as we live we shall have to walk in the world. Duty and care there will be, covered dangers, miry paths, stepping stones to find, streams to cross; these are our perplexities, our problems. our anxious questions. But overhead we always have good weather. Some that have no faith see only what is below, but those that look up find a heaven beams of golden light to cheer and com-

fort and inspire, and brilliant skies that promise the day when the sun will never go down.-Central Presbyterian. PERSONAL AND CRITICAL.

The drapery on President McKinley's pew in First Methodist Episcopal Church of Canton, Ohio, was removed the other day. Although all pews in the church are free, the McKinley pew has not been oc-cupied by anyone since the funeral. It is to be permanently marked by a plate.

"Yes, suh," said the colored brother, 'de mule took en th'owed him sky-hich but Providence wuz on his side, en he lit squar on his head!"-Atlanta Constitu-

It is now asserted that Andrew Carnegie plagiarized in choosing for his epitaph the words: "Here lies a man who knew enough to surround himself with men wiser than he." The late Emperor Frederick, of Germany, made a speech shortly after his father's death in which he said: "He was a great man-great esnecially because he knew how to surround nimself with men greater than he was."

"Mr President," sald the Senator from Oklahoma, forcing himself to be-calm, "as it is my intention to take a swift punch at the Senator from Arizona, I move you, sir, that the Senate go into executive session and from a ring." And it was so ordered .- Chicago Tribune.

It is interesting to note that John G. Milburn, of Buffalo, in whose house President McKinley was tenderly cared for after being mortally wounded by the assassin Czolgolsz, is a Democrat of sufficient prominence to be thought of by the New York Democracy as a candidate or Governor of that State.-Baltimore News.

It took nerve to go up San Juan hill. but before any man who accomplished that feat can gain a reputation for being without fear he should preside over a convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution.—Kansas City

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